



THE NEW HAMPSHIRE



TROUBADOUR

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2010



The image you see above, as well as the front and back cover photos were taken by Mark Stevens. View his photos at www.tinypurl.com/cryqal and www.flickr.com/photos/holgatime.

All three images were photographed at The College Woods Natural Area at the campus of the University of New Hampshire in Durham. Located on the west side of the main campus, College Woods comprises nearly 250 acres of woods, streams and small fields. Presently, nearly 64 acres within the main woods area is designated as a Natural Area.

Since 1961, this preservation status has ensured that nothing has been done to alter natural process within the Natural Area. The College Woods Natural Area offers miles of trails to walk, bike or jog and stands as the oldest and most intensively used University property for walking, running, and general natural relaxation recreation.

Publisher's Note

The NH Troubadour comes to you every month singing the praises of New Hampshire, a state whose beauty and opportunities should tempt you to come and share those good things that make life here so delightful.

The NH Troubadour, 1931-1951

It is my pleasure to present you *The NH Troubadour* as a gift and a window for witnessing the extraordinary people, places, history and culture that make our Granite State so unique. This is a publication you can truly call your own. It is my hope that you enjoy it and share it; that you close each issue feeling a little better, a little wiser and a little prouder of life here in our wonderful state.

Robert J. Finlay

Letter from the Editor

We have much to be grateful for in our great state. Mother Nature has blessed us with majestic mountaintops, valleys of splendor, serene lakes, a coastline offering an expansive view across the Atlantic and forests and foliage unrivaled in their brilliance. Grand surroundings to be sure, but at times the beauty of our setting can be found in the subtlety of the details.

Look closely at the image on the opposite page and you will notice a passage of time caught in the camera eye. A change of seasons and more as the last traces of fall are frozen in place. Allow yourself to conjure a moment that remains forever unchanged in your mind—perhaps a memory that brings unbridled joy. Of course, change is inevitable, and life moves on, often more quickly than any of us would like or could imagine. At times we are left wanting for things that are no more. But, it might be wise to remember the lessons of our youth and seek comfort in the words of Theodor Geisel, or, to most of us, renowned children's author Dr. Seuss, a graduate of Dartmouth College who said simply, "Don't be sad it's over. Be glad it happened."

Acorns, like the one photographed on the opposite page, appear only on adult trees and are often seen as a symbol of patience, maturation and the fruition of long, hard labor. In this month's "LABOR and LOVE" (pg. 15) Ron Roberts gives us a thoughtful glimpse of patience, strength and support that has stood the test of time, much like the acorn suspended in ice.

As we honor those veterans who have served our country we are reminded of the freedom we have to live life as it's meant to be. This month's "Troubadour Trumpets" (pg. 23) profiles "Doc" Stewart and his passionate efforts alongside numerous volunteers with NH's chapter of Rolling Thunder, an organization dedicated to helping U.S. Servicemen and their families, who've fought selflessly to defend our freedoms and now face personal trials and tribulations in their lives.

It is the example set by individuals like Stewart and found in communities throughout the Granite State, filled with hard-working, honest and kind neighbors that make us proud to call New Hampshire our home.

Yes, there is comfort to be found living in New Hampshire—a peace of mind and heart that can be described with detail in all this state has to offer, or as succinctly as "a man alone with his walking stick."

- Michael DeBlasi



An Artist's escape

by David Lazar

More than a century later, Saint-Gaudens historic site is a timeless window into artistic brilliance

CORNISH—Augustus Saint-Gaudens was unimpressed as he traversed the treeless patch of farmland his friend and attorney Charles Beaman recommended for him here in the cold, dismal gray of a March afternoon.

The year was 1885, and Beaman was doing all he could to pitch Saint-Gaudens, quickly emerging as the nation's most celebrated sculptor, on the value of having a country home to craft a major new commission and, at the insistence of his wife Augusta, raise their children away from the bustle and noise of the big city.

With studios in New York, Paris and Rome, Beaman believed the banks of the Connecticut River, Mt. Ascutney's snow-capped peak in neighboring Vermont a soaring backdrop, would provide just the solace his fellow New Yorker needed. It would also give Beaman, who'd scooped up more than 3,000 acres locally in a recession, a neighbor he desperately needed in his quiet new corner of the world.



Saint-Gaudens spent more than 20 years sculpting in Cornish, drawing inspiration from its abundant nature and solitude. (Photo courtesy of the National Park Service).

But Saint-Gaudens had all but made up his mind, asking to return to the train and head back to New York. That is, until Augusta – as she often did – put her foot down, and Beaman made the artist an offer he couldn't refuse.

“Saint-Gaudens had just won the commission to sculpt a standing version of President Lincoln for Chicago's Lincoln Park,” says Henry Duffy, curator of the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site. “Beaman, of course, knew this and promised to find him an abundance of what he called ‘Lincoln-shaped men’ from around the area who could pose for Saint-Gaudens... He fell for it, and in 1885, began to rent the property in the summers.”

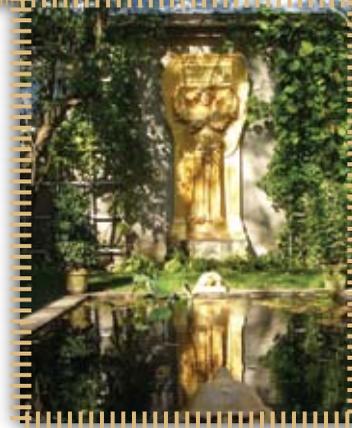
Beaman delivered on his promise. In the hills and farmland surrounding Cornish, Saint-Gaudens – who'd four years earlier catapulted himself into world renown with his memorial of Admiral David Farragut in New York's Madison

Square – found no shortage of men closely resembling Lincoln both in carriage and stature to pose. Lincoln's son Robert would later call Saint-Gaudens' bronze monument of his father the finest he'd seen, remarking how faithfully it captured his father's mannerisms, how he wore his clothes and how he stood.

“His was a very simple, honest and direct style of art,” Duffy says. “At a time when most sculptors were creating statues of figures far removed from the lives of ordinary citizens – Greek gods and the like – Saint-Gaudens was creating sculptures accessible to most Americans.”



Saint-Gaudens and his wife, Augusta, would transform a treeless plot of farmland in Cornish into a rural retreat of timeless beauty. (Photo courtesy of the National Park Service; Photo: David Lazar)

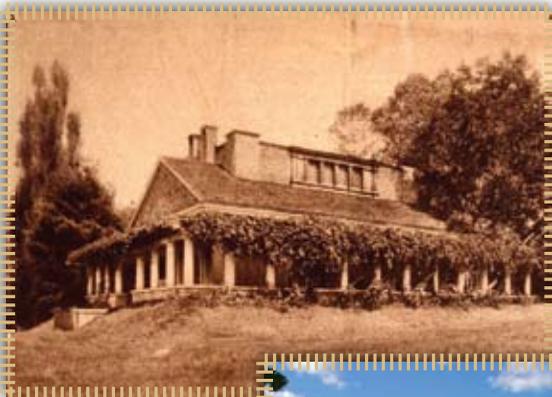


The Cornish arts colony proved a center of American creativity and power, hosting dozens of the artists, performers and even President Woodrow Wilson, who for two summers relocated the White House to the home of American novelist Winston Churchill.

Over the two-plus decades he sculpted in Cornish, Saint-Gaudens would earn the title of American Michelangelo for the energy and incomparable emotion he incorporated into his hundreds of works – many memorializing America's Civil War icons. For, in the quiet, natural setting of his Cornish property and the warmth of the surrounding community, Saint-Gaudens found more than just ‘Lincoln-shaped men’ – he found a place to reflect and create; a place to refine his craft and to discover a side of himself he hadn't before seen.

Twenty years later, Saint-Gaudens' secret hideaway would no longer be a secret, as he, like Beaman, sought to share the beauty of this remote region with his friends and

contemporaries. That a secluded New Hampshire community would emerge as an artists' retreat is, of course, nothing new to Granite State history. From Willa



Saint-Gaudens' Little Studio was where the artist created small components of his larger works and also kept his office, which included one of the state's first telephones. (Photo courtesy of the National Park Service; Photo: David Lazar)



Still, it is Cornish that many historians regard as perhaps the grandest – and unlikely – of New Hampshire's arts colonies, a place where dozens of elite contributors to world culture, from painters like Maxfield Parrish and George de Forest Brush, to performers Ethel Barrymore and Isadora Duncan, and even the leader of the free world built or rented garden cottages along the Connecticut with hopes of channeling the same inspiration from the rolling hills and vivid blue skies that fueled Saint-Gaudens' work.

"I don't think there's any question that Cornish in its day could be seen as a real center and concentration of American power and creativity," says Charlie Platt, a New York-based architect whose family has been in Cornish for generations



Saint-Gaudens' \$20 gold coin, commissioned in 1904 as a part of President Theodore Roosevelt's Arts Cabinet, is considered the most beautiful American coin ever created. (Photo courtesy of the National Park Service)

Cather's pilgrimages to Grand Monadnock in Jaffrey, to the plentiful purple lilacs of Walpole that inspired Louisa May Alcott's writing, and Celia Thaxter's parlor of vacationing musicians, painters and poets on Appledore Island, much of New Hampshire's story has been written in the quiet escapes and relaxed settings it has offered some of the nation's great artists and critical thinkers. The wooded seclusion of Peterborough's MacDowell Colony, where Thornton Wilder penned "Our

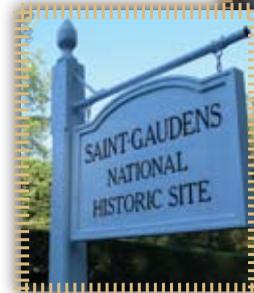
Town," still serves as an incubator for fine art, while dozens of summer stock stages from New London to Lincoln continue to host and churn out, as they have for more than 80 years, some of theatre's top talents.

and whose grandfather Charles built many of the Gilded Age retreats for well-heeled vacationers that dotted the local landscape. "I think comparisons of the Connecticut River Valley to today's Silicon Valley are not out of line. It attracted the leading artists of its time, and through them others – writers, editors, journalists and eventually the President of the United States."

Indeed, the home Platt designed for best-selling American novelist Winston Churchill, titled Harlakenden, caught the eye of arts enthusiast Ellen Wilson, who dragged her husband Woodrow to Cornish for two summers to escape Washington's unrelenting July swelter, when the heat all but shut down the city. Wilson in 1914 and 1915 would bring the entire White House apparatus to the area, using neighboring Windsor, Vermont's post office as a makeshift command post.



Curator Henry Duffy (left) and Superintendent Rick Kendall greet more than 30,000 visitors each year to the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, New Hampshire's only National Park. (Photo: David Lazar)



In spite of all the attention Cornish's roster of celebrity visitors attracted each summer, there was never a doubt as to the center of gravity in the Cornish colony. The plot of land Saint-Gaudens initially dismissed as boring, barren and removed had long since been transformed into a property of almost mesmerizing beauty;

Troubadour Treasures

"Neither gas nor tire ration could keep me from my annual visit to Sugar Hill, NH—for strength and inspiration to carry on. The Troubadour keeps alive the love of the north."

George M. Davis, Jr.
New Rochelle, N.Y.

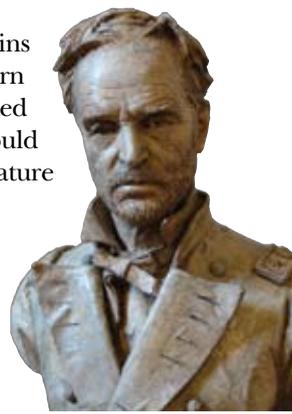


NH Troubadour
November, 1942

a rural oasis of hedge mazes, sculpture gardens, fountains and birch tree stands; a place where Saint Gaudens – born in Ireland, raised in New York, trained in Rome, respected across the globe as both an artist and businessman – could create without interruption, experience humanity and nature in its purest form, and eventually spend his final days.

“Cornish and Aspet House were a haven for Saint-Gaudens,” says Rick Kendall, Superintendent of the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site. “It freed him. He discovered aspects of life here that he didn’t have access to in the city. It expanded his imagination and his understanding of natural beauty.”

To ascend the long, tree-lined drive and set foot onto the lushly landscaped grounds of New Hampshire’s only national park is to cross the threshold into another world – one of art, nature, form and meaning – and to understand



Drafts of Saint-Gaudens’ iconic works can be found throughout the national park’s grounds and studios, from the Farragut and Adams memorials to the William Tecumseh Sherman Monument and perhaps his crowning achievement, the Robert Gould Shaw Memorial, which took 14 years to complete and sits on Boston’s Beacon Hill. (Photos: David Lazar)

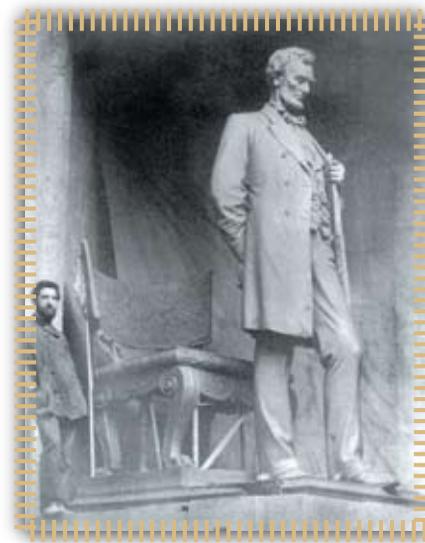
the freedom found here. The Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site is as much a museum of the world’s finest sculpture as it is a living, breathing mural of one man’s extraordinary life. Full-size drafts of the same iconic



works Saint-Gaudens created for parks and museums across the country can be found throughout Aspet House’s grounds, often appearing to sprout out of the landscape. There is the stern, battle-ready Admiral Farragut, whose sleeves and hands were completed with the help of Saint-Gaudens’ mother and brother, and whose commission gave Saint-Gaudens the money he needed to request Augusta’s hand in marriage. There is the bust



of General William Tecumseh Sherman (the statue stands at the entrance of New York’s Central Park), a sculpture Saint-Gaudens had to convince the irascible Civil



Abraham Lincoln’s son Robert would call Saint-Gaudens’ standing sculpture of his father, crated in Cornish, the finest he’d seen. (Photo courtesy of the National Park Service)

War commander to pose for, winning his consent only after promising to introduce him to Robert Louis Stevenson, writer of the general’s favorite play, “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.” Sherman’s bowtie on the statue is noticeably crooked. Indeed, when Saint-Gaudens asked if he’d like it straightened, he replied characteristically, “I’ll wear it how I damned well please!”

“It is a fine sculptor who is able to capture the human form, but it is an extraordinary sculptor who is able to capture his figure’s emotion and make his audience feel it,” Duffy says. “It has been said of the Sherman sculpture that you wouldn’t want to have coffee with that guy. He looks like he could reach out and grab you by the neck. To be able to capture that depth of personality and emotion through an inanimate material like plaster is simply amazing.”

Saint-Gaudens’ early sculptures of Lincoln

are said to be the basis for Cornish colony artist Daniel Chester French’s statue enshrined in Washington’s Lincoln Memorial; while his double-eagle \$20 gold coin, commissioned by President Theodore Roosevelt to project American strength, is widely considered the most beautiful domestic coin ever created.

Perhaps Saint-Gaudens’ crowning achievement can be found in the Robert Gould Shaw Memorial on Boston’s Beacon Hill across from the Massachusetts State



Once the nation’s longest covered bridge, the Cornish-Windsor Bridge was travelled by many colony luminaries including summer vacationer Woodrow Wilson, who set up White House operations in the neighboring Windsor, VT, post office. (Photo: David Lazar)

House. Completed in 1897, it immortalizes the commander of the Massachusetts 54th Regiment in the Civil War – the Union’s first all African-American regiment. Saint-Gaudens took more than 14 years to complete the Shaw memorial. He initially sculpted only Shaw on horseback, before determining it incomplete without the three rows of infantrymen marching behind him, looks of determination and, no doubt uncertainty, on their faces as they head into the abyss.

If Aspet House is a menagerie of one man’s artistic brilliance, so, too, it is a window into his growth as a human being and his evolving belief in community. Upon learning around 1900 that he had cancer, Saint-Gaudens – who’d earned a considerable fortune as a businessman recreating his sculptures for multiple audiences – quietly shuttered his Paris, New York and Rome studios, bringing dozens of employees to live and work full-time in Cornish.

“He took his role here very seriously,” Duffy says. “There was a sense of noblesse oblige, a need to get along well not only with his New York friends, but with locals, as well.” The country seemed to bring Saint-Gaudens back to life after his illness. He took up sports, playing hockey on a frozen pond with his assistants. And while first irritated when they showed him no mercy on the ice, Saint-Gaudens was later grateful to be treated like one of them. One story has it that Saint-Gaudens was crossing the Cornish-Windsor Bridge back into NH one winter day when he saw a

group of children playing in the snow with just one sled. He told his driver to stop and turn around, returning from Windsor just minutes later having bought a sled for each kid.

Cornish also brought Saint-Gaudens closer to his truest love – Augusta. By the door of the Saint-Gaudens site’s new studio, unadorned, hangs a simple bas relief portrait of Augusta, standing on Aspet House’s front porch, Mt. Ascutney in the background. She holds a bowl of sweet peas, her favorite flower. A heart is drawn on her sleeve to demonstrate her caring disposition. At her side is a shaggy sheepdog, widely believed to be Saint-Gaudens, a dog who’d once strayed during their marriage but now and forever would remain loyal to her. It was to be his final and perhaps most personal work. Augustus Saint-Gaudens would die in 1907, revered as his nation’s finest sculptor, and laid to rest in a secluded area by the woods of his property. His art and his memory, however, remain very much alive.

“Travelling around the country, Saint-Gaudens still speaks to people,” Duffy says. “There is an honesty and emotion to his work that is timeless. He wasn’t gussying it up, but portraying it as it was. As Americans, we like that. So often, the artist is lost behind the medium or behind the easel. Not here. At a time when so much of our history is fading away, this site remains a time capsule of a remarkable age. It’s a privilege to be a part of it.”

Special thanks to Charlie Platt and the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site for their assistance and generosity with this story.



After being diagnosed with cancer, Saint-Gaudens would spend his final years in Cornish, looking out his front porch at Mt. Ascutney, sculpting a tribute to his wife Augusta, and being laid to rest in a wooded corner of his property. (Photos: David Lazar)



Troubadour Treasures

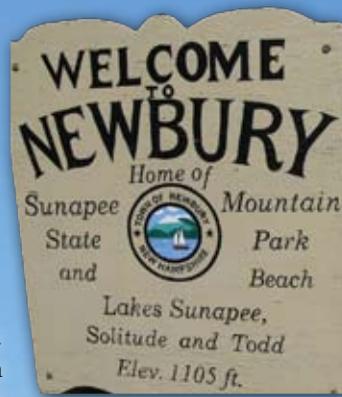
A sign, “You are now entering the only Henniker on earth,” which greets you on Route 202, is literally true. In 1768 the 31 families living in New Marlborough applied for its incorporation under that name, but Governor Wentworth insisted that it be named in honor of his friend, John Henniker of London, a wealthy merchant.



NH Troubadour
November, 1943

Nearly three centuries after seducing settlers with its serene waters and majestic mountain vistas, the tiny lakeside hideaway of Newbury continues to dazzle vacationers, skiers and locals alike with its historic architecture, friendly neighbors and untouched natural beauty in the heart of the Sunapee region.

First granted as Hereford in 1754, Newbury underwent several name changes before its official incorporation in 1837 under the name suggested by its settlers, originally from Newbury, MA. Nestled between Lake Sunapee's southern tip and the breathtaking backdrop of Mount Sunapee's gentle slopes, Newbury for decades quietly prospered as a fishing and farming village. With the arrival of rail travel in the 1870s came a boon in local tourism, as the Newbury Cut (a massive rock-blasting project that cleared the way for train tracks all the way to Claremont) brought thousands of summer visitors from Boston and New York to the area's tranquil waters. Once there, steamships collected vacationers by the



tracks, depositing them in the hundreds of homes and hotels newly built around the lake. Perhaps the most famous of these visitors: John Hay, Secretary of State to Presidents McKinley and Roosevelt, whose iconic lakeside retreat, the Fells, remains among the region's most scenic and enduring landmarks.

While the explosion of the automobile in the mid-20th century altered the tourist landscape across the region and much of the state, Newbury remains as it's always been: a hidden jewel for nature and history lovers. Today, no visit is complete without a stop by the Fells Historic Site, with its revolving art exhibitions, miles of nature trails, sprawling flower and rock gardens, and bird's eye views of the lake and mountain. Nearby, you can check out the newly restored 1832 town Meetinghouse, a clapboard classic of Bulfinch design (the creator of Boston Common and architect of the U.S. Capitol) with its distinctive rearward facing pulpit. Finally, you'll want to be outfitted by the experts at ski and bike mainstay Outspokin' before tackling the slopes of Mt. Sunapee, a ski destination since 1948, drawing some 250,000 visitors each season and home each summer to the nation's oldest crafts festival. There, friendly folks like Jim Freeman can regale you in local lore and point you to the region's most arresting views before sending you on your way down the mountain.

- David Lazar

Troubadour Town Facts: *Newbury*

- Population of 2,068 (est. 2009)
- Mount Sunapee, the highest point in town, has an elevation of 2,726 feet above sea level.
- Hopewell Farms has been farmed consistently since the 18th century, with the exception of a ten year period during the Great Depression. At one time in the early 1900's, Hopewell Farms was the largest poultry producer in New England, and among the first to use wind energy to produce electric service for the farm. Today, Hopewell Farms is completely energy self-sufficient.
- The most famous resident of Newbury has been John Milton Hay. Hay served as President Lincoln's personal secretary during the Civil War and was present when the President died after being shot at the Ford Theater. Hay also served the United States as Secretary of State and helped negotiate the Treaty of Paris in 1898.
- The Fells Historic Site, adjacent to the John Hay National Wildlife Refuge, is part of 876 acres protected of a forest country estate. Protection efforts have enabled Lake Sunapee to consistently be named one of the cleanest lakes in NH.

- Michael DeBlasi





A Frugal Lot

IN NEW HAMPSHIRE, WE DO OUR BEST to keep our budget belts notched one hole south of tight.

During World War II, Miles and Margaret Dustin of Rochester ran for state representative on a frugality ticket. A vote for Miles and Margaret would save gas, tires, and mileage money. Sure enough, we elected the first husband and wife legislators in the country.

An old Deering family was known for its money-saving ways. A neighbor testified that in all the years he'd driven past the house, he'd never seen but one light on. When the patriarch was stove up in a tractor rollover, the neighbor visited him in the hospital.

“You look like you're in pain,” the neighbor said.

“Yes, I am. It hurts terrible.”

“You've got that push button right there and the tube in your arm so you can self-medicate.”

“I know,” the patriarch said, “but it costs so much.”

It is possible to be too frugal for your own good. Leon Hawkinson worked as a clerk in the logging camps up Berlin way. He sold supplies to the loggers. For a joke, he marked the jar of cigars, 8 cents apiece or three for a quarter. He said, “I sold a good many three for a quarter.”

Auntie flew to New York for her operation, but it didn't go well. The hospital asked about arrangements to get her body home. “Well,” Uncle Nub said, “she had a round-trip ticket.”

Yes, we're a penny-pinching bunch (and proud of it). Come holiday time, we might loosen up just a bit, but it hurts. Fresh turkey tastes better, but the frozen's only 49 cents a pound. What to do? Harriet waited until fresh turkeys went on sale, then bought three and froze two of them.

We wouldn't be human without an occasional splurge. Little Janie, the youngest of five girls, lived in hand-me-downs. One Christmas, Mother splurged on a party dress from Pariseau's in Manchester. When Janie opened the package, she declared, “Mummy, it's beautiful! Whose was it?”

To bring us up to date though, the littlest Yankee had a question for his mummy. He was acting up, so she reminded him that Santa knew if he was being nice or naughty. “How's he know,” the littlest Yankee said. “Did you text him?”

Becky Rule has lived all her life (so far) in New Hampshire. She has written several popular books set in her home state, including her latest collection of stories, “Live Free and Eat Pie” (Islandport Press), and hosts live storytelling events, many sponsored by the New Hampshire Humanities Council. She posts stories regularly on her website, www.livefreeandeatpie.com.

LABOR and LOVE

by Ron Roberts

WALKING STICK

POLISHED BY PALM OVER TIME IT STANDS SLIM AND TALL
CASUALLY CORNERED AGAINST TWO WALLS
ON WEATHERED STOOP DOWN FROM THE KITCHEN HALL
KNOWS ONLY PATIENCE WILL HEED HIS CALL
SMOOTH OF CROWN AND SCUFFED OF HEEL
TIME AWAITS HIS FAMILIAR FEEL
FREQUENTLY STROLLED ALONG A QUIET HEDGEROW
TIME TO REFLECT OF TURMOIL'S PAST AND LETTING GO
TAPPED AND SHUFFLED AMONG THE BRUSH
IN HOPES OF GAME OR BIRD TO FLUSH
FAMILIARITY OF HIS GROWN TIRED TOUCH
IF ONLY TO PROVIDE A LEANING CRUTCH
SIMPLE PLEASURES DO MAKE US RICH
OF BROOK'S WET ROCKS OR A ONE HORSE TWITCH
OR A MAN ALONE WITH HIS WALKING STICK



NH native Ron Roberts has always felt a kinship to the land. Raised on a family farm, the retired industrial welder boilermaker, Ron, along with his wife of 33 years, raised their family in a home he designed and built in Stratham. Recently Ron has turned his artistic talents from timber frames and barn raising to poetry and photography as displayed here, from his self-published book “LABOR and LOVE.”

"Your Troubadour" is designed specifically for you, the reader, to share a bit of your memories, moments, stories and smiles about this state. We encourage you to submit to us your essays, poems, recipes, photographs and more—provided of course, they maintain the standards and decency we have come to expect here in NH. Send your treasures for publication electronically to: submissions@nhtroubadour.com or mail to: NH Troubadour, 29 Armory Road, Milford, NH 03055.

Early November

by *B.P. Duncan*

After the leaves finish falling
before the first snow
I come to the White Mountains.

The deep hues of evergreens
and white trunks of birches
create a season of clearer vision.

I wear my warmest clothes
to watch the sun weaken
until stars intensify
Over Black Mountain.

(B.P. Duncan is a Troubadour reader from Derry, NH)

Caught

by *Charles Bria*

The earth glows
Skies darken
Rolling grey—crashes
Camera flashes
Wet newspapers
Puddle splashes
Rain dripping
Off eyelashes.

(Charles Bria is a Troubadour reader from Sanbornville, NH)

A Winter's Joy

by *Lou Catano*

A light in the window
a wreath on the door
the sleigh stands its vigil
while mittens salute the hearthside
the sun has faded
as the moon slowly awakens
her light producing
a diamond snow carpet
for all eyes to enjoy
the children are safe
tucked in for the night
as they sleep lightly
hoping to hear
a hearty greeting from a visitor
who comes
but once a year

(Lou Catano is a Troubadour reader from Strafford, NH)

Troubadour Treasures

An editorial in the Concord Monitor, after quoting facts on traffic safety, industrial records, percent of old people, low crime rate, and war service continues:

"These are facts which mean something, and what they mean is that New Hampshire people as a whole are among the best citizens in this great nation. It means that New Hampshire people live more moderately and more wisely, yet with a sense of solid patriotism. It means that New Hampshire people come closer to living as all Americans aspire to live than do the people of almost any other state.

New Hampshire is not a state of excesses. It is not big territorially. It is not over-populated. It is not all one thing, but many things, geographically, economically, socially, and even politically."



NH Troubadour
December, 1950

All entries become property of The Troubadour and are subject to editing for content and space; views displayed here do not necessarily reflect those of this publication and are submitted by readers of this magazine.

MOONSTRUCK

by *F. Patrick Grady*

“Oh, look,” she said, pointing a small finger.

“I can see the moon and the sky is still blue.”

Interrupting our pace, we stopped there to linger.

For, at less than three, she instinctively knew

That the heavens above had something to say.

(More important than shopping the mall on that day.)

So open to wonder, she needed to know

What gave to that sky an ethereal glow.

And seizing the moment I ventured to say

What little I knew about moons and their way

Of moving the tides of each ocean and bay.

I told about full moons and blue moons and more.

About eclipses and moonbeams and man’s

need to explore.

About spacecraft and landings on the moon’s dusty floor.

But standing there muffled against wind and the cold,

So tiny, so fragile—yet somehow so old.

She looked up at me smiling and patiently said,

“it’s just the moon, Poppa; now the sun can go to bed.”

(F. Patrick Grady is a Troubadour reader from Peterborough, NH)

Esprit De Corps

by *Pamela MacBean*

Maple leaves swirl around the forest
like scarlet letters whispering doom,
severed from the spring of their youth,
the summer of vitality,
the lifeblood of association.

Set adrift one by one to fall.

But while laying at the feet of their matriarch,
they know that soon an ermine cloak of snow
will swaddle them gently as they fade,
crumbling back into earth.

When the icicles weep at winter’s passing,
seedlings will drink cold tears

and rise to clothe the naked ground

with tender tendrils spreading resurrection.

(Pamela MacBean is a Troubadour reader from Dalton, NH)

Village Dreams

by *Loisanne Foster*

Hopes spring forth from forest floors,

silent as Indian pipes,

never seen to rise,

yet always there,

waiting till our footfalls fade

before their ghostly dance begins –

The odd shack, well-hid in brush,

The clearing starred with graying stumps,
The dirt heaped high where someone sought a spring,
And sagging lumber pile beneath November trees.

Someone in their village dreams.

(Loisanne Foster is a Troubadour reader from Marlow, NH)

Just Once

by Paul Lenzi

Trees understand the breeze
Gestures by their leafy hands
Catch each gust for a brief moment
Why can't I grasp it, too?
It just blows through my fingers
Even when cupped to the task
The air is my friend, I know
When it moves, it stirs me
When it blows, it fills me
When it roars, it energizes me
But I need to hold the wind
I need to feel it yield
In my poor leafless hands
Just once, not again, not always
Just once, for brief moment,
Not for long, not forever
I will let it go, I promise

(Paul Lenzi is a Troubadour reader from Henniker, NH)

The Eleventh Month

by Lissa Boissonneault

I like November
It's a broody month
Days set early
Limbs are bare
Leaves long gone in all their earlier glory

I love seeing through the woods,
New discoveries from the year past
Enlighten our vision

November is nature's signal to tuck in
With winter fast approaching

Fall chores are done and we can breathe a
Long sigh and sit a spell
Yes, I do like November

(Lissa Boissonneault is a Troubadour reader from Sugar Hill, NH)

Troubadour Treasures

Country Christmas

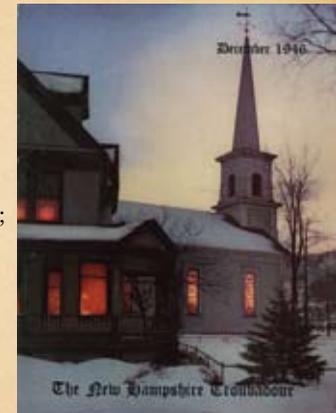
by Adelbert M. Jakeman

Beneath the canopy of winter sky
Are hemlocks standing heavy with the snow;
Their lovely branches bend their burden low,
And meadows soft along the roadside lie.

Reflected in a golden window light
Is found contentment caught between four walls;
And resting in their rough and simple stalls
Are living things secure against the night.

Familiar sounds break through the crystal dark;
The bell that echoes from the starlit spire,
The hoofs of running horses striking fire,
And hounds that listen to their lonesome bark.

Each tiny town becomes a sparkling gem
Of beauty born of ancient Bethlehem.



NH Troubadour
December, 1946

Our New Hampshire

by Robert J. Finlay

It has been nearly 150 years since President Lincoln enshrined Thanksgiving as a national holiday, thanks in no small measure to the petitioning of one persistent Granite Stater, Newport's Sarah Josepha Hale, the author of "Mary Had a Little Lamb."

Times were tough, the nation in the midst of a civil war that threatened its very foundation. Gratitude was not likely the first thing on the minds of many folks, as they struggled to put food on their tables and parents faced the worry and uncertainty battle brought for their young ones. Hale—the first to urge equal education for American girls, the first to start day nurseries for working women, and the first editor of the first woman's magazine in America—knew this. She was not to be daunted. For in the challenges faced by her neighbors, Hale, a religious woman who at 34 had been widowed and penniless with five small children to raise, knew how important it was both to humanity and the state of the Union to take stock of one's blessings, to believe in something larger than oneself, and to reach out with a hand of charity to others who were less fortunate.

In a November 1858 edition of *Godey's Lady's Book*, Hale wrote: "Let this day, from this time forth, as long as our Banner of Stars floats on the breeze, be the grand Thanksgiving Holiday of our nation, when the noise and tumult of worldliness may be exchanged for the laugh of happy children, the glad greetings of family reunion and the humble gratitude of the Christian heart."

Five years later, President Lincoln would sign his famous Thanksgiving Proclamation of 1863, calling for a day of shared humility and gratitude, regardless of faith or cause, and of shared compassion for the "widows, orphans, mourners, or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged."

While our struggles today bear little comparison to those of our fellow citizens a century-and-a-half ago, it is often easy for us to lose sight of the gifts we have been given or the needs of our neighbors. Since we first began re-publishing the *Troubadour* in September 2008, you, our readers, have continually reminded us of the talent, generosity, unabashed independence, and basic goodness of Granite State residents. In turn, we hope that we have, through these pages given you additional reason to be proud and grateful to live in quite simply the best place on earth.

On behalf of everyone at the *Troubadour* and my family, I want to express heartfelt gratitude for your continued readership and thoughtful contributions, and to wish each of you a Happy Thanksgiving.

Do you know of a special person, organization or tradition in your community that deserves to be trumpeted on these pages? Would you like to join our mailing list? Contact us at www.nhtroubadour.com or by telephone at 603.673.0100.

Troubadour Trumpets

Recognizing Those Who Make a Difference

Nashua's Jeffrey "Doc" Stewart likes to joke he's the kind of biker you wouldn't worry about taking home to your family. Indeed, behind the shades, the handlebar mustache, the vest, the patches, the throaty roar of his Yamaha 1600 lies not a grizzled road warrior, but a heart of gold.

As president of NH's chapter of Rolling Thunder, Stewart, 43, has made it his mission for more than a decade to ride, raise awareness and provide support for U.S. soldiers and families in need, from POWs and MIAs to former servicemen facing poverty, illness, and homelessness. "When a serviceman takes the oath, he commits his life to his country and asks for just two things in return," Stewart says. "One, should I make it back, Uncle Sam will provide me with the health care I need. And two, if I don't make it back alive, he'll make sure my body comes back to my family. These are simple, basic things. We owe it to our vets."



Each year, Nashua's "Doc" Stewart and Rolling Thunder volunteers rev up their bikes and roll up their sleeves to let NH servicemen in need know they're not forgotten. (Photo: David Lazar)

Stewart, an Army vet who by day heads a Haverhill, MA,-based EMS service, began his ride with Rolling Thunder in 1995 when a neighbor—a fellow vet and biker—suggested attending the organization's national rally in Washington, D.C. The experience weighed heavily. As he slowly rode the length of the Mall, Stewart remembers onlookers patting him on the back, offering thanks for his service. "I cried right there on my bike," he says, his eyes welling. "It tugs at your heartstrings. It tells you this is what you're put here to do."

Fifteen years later, Stewart still heeds that call. Each year, the Epping-based organization helps hundreds of ex-servicemen and their families across NH, volunteering time and resources at Manchester's Liberty House (a shelter for homeless vets), providing escorts for military funerals, sending care packages to troops, cleaning the state's veterans' cemetery, and making regular visits to the VA Hospital and Tilton Veterans Home – all without compensation. "It can be spending five minutes with a vet on a park bench or two hours with a group at the veterans home," Stewart says. "These interactions can change lives. These people need to know they're remembered and appreciated. They have stories. They have worth. They've earned our respect."

With more than 70 members of all ages, from Vietnam, Korea and Gulf War vets to retirees, schoolteachers, cooks, construction workers and business owners (some bikers, some not), NH's chapter is united in both its diversity and commitment to help others. A Claremont chapter is expected to open next year. Just don't call it a motorcycle club, Stewart insists. "We're a veteran support organization, first and foremost," he says. "You don't need to own a bike or to be a vet. It isn't about the patches on our backs. It's about camaraderie and providing support to each other." For more information, visit www.rolling-thunder-nh1.org.



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